

CLAIMS

Subt B6
1. (Amended) A method for inhibiting the degradation of mammalian natriuretic peptides in specimen, which comprises using, upon handling the specimen, a container wherein the face coming into contact with the specimen is made of or coated with a material inhibiting the activation of a substance degrading the peptides.

2. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said material is silicone or plastic.

Subt B7
3. The method as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein said mammal is human, dog, pig, rat and mouse.

Subt B8
4. The method as claimed in ^{claim 1 or 2} ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~, wherein said natriuretic peptide is BNP.

Subt B9
5. The method as claimed in ^{claim 1 or 2} ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~, wherein said specimen does not contain aprotinin.

6. A method for measuring mammalian natriuretic peptides, which comprises the method as claimed in claim 1.

7. (Amended) A kit for measuring mammalian natriuretic peptides, which comprises a container wherein the face coming into contact with specimen is made of or coated with a material inhibiting the activation of a substance degrading the peptides.

8. The kit as claimed in claim 7, wherein said specimen does not contain aprotinin.